Serving Marine Corps Air Station New River and Jacksonville, N.C.

Vol. 43 No. 10 May 19, 2004

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FLIGHTLINES

Budget for Baby Classes

Are you expecting a baby? Could you benefit from information about formula, diapers and baby item costs? Would you like to receive a layette, which includes terry sleepers, handmade sweater sets and Afghan, blankets, sheets, towels and more, for free?

Budget for Baby is a three-hour class held the second Tuesday of each month from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

For more information or to reserve a seat, call the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society at 449-6431.

Summer Camp Volunteers

The Muscular Dystrophy Association is looking for personnel to serve as camp counselors at MDA Summer Camp 2004.

Counselors' duties include attending to physical needs; reporting medical problems to the medical staff; setting limits; promoting cooperation and respect; encouraging participation; ensuring safe practices; participating in activities; and sharing an upbeat attitude.

This year's summer camp will go from July 31 - Aug. 6 at Camp Carefree in Stokesdale, N.C.

If you're interested and would like to attend a brief to learn more, call Sgt. Juan Vara at 449-5431.

National Night Out

The National Night Out Committee is looking for groups, clubs and organizations to participate in the National Night Out on Aug. 3. This is a cooperative effort to promote community watch groups and crime prevention methods.

The event is presented by the City of Jacksonville Police Department, Camp Lejeune and New River Marine Corps Community Services and Onslow County.

For more information, contact Julie Robson or Charlotte Rodden at 938-7385.

School Board Elections

The Camp Lejeune Dependent School Board is holding elections Aug. 26 to fill upcoming vacancies on the Camp Lejeune Dependent School Board.

The term in office is three years.

Prospective candidates may obtain an "Intent to Seek Election" package from any of the eight schools or the superintendent's office and then file with the superintendent's office before 4:30 p.m. on Aug. 6.

A candidate may be an active duty person or their spouse residing in permanent base housing aboard Camp Lejeune or New River. They must also be nominated by one eligible voter.

For more information, contact Cindy McLaughlin at 355-0159, Annette Tesch at 219-1397 or Rebecca Humphrey at 451-2461, ext. 217.

Motor <u>Transport</u>

The Marine Corps Motor Transport Association is holding their 8th annual reunion meeting Sept. 19 - 22 in Denver.

For more information, contact Hal Clapp at 346-8797 or e-mail usmcmta@vol.com.

Transitional Recruiting

Leaving active duty? Give the Marine Corps Reserve a call to see what they can do for you.

They have programs such as Active Reserves, Selected Marine Corps Reserves, Individual Mobilization Augmentee and Individual Ready Reserve.

For more information, call the Transitional Recruiting Office at 449-5465.

Driving in the Rain

Rain is almost a yearround challenge for some drivers, but for many, it's primarily seasonal.

Some may forget about the rain during the summer, and when it arrives again, they may need to make preparations.

Keep tires properly inflated and inspect the tread for uneven wear, indicating the need for wheel alignment.
Also, look for bulges and bald tires.

For the best visibility wiper blades should be replaced annually, keep your windshield washer reservoir full and replace broken or cracked windshields.

For more information, call Marie Silence, Station safety specialist, at 449-5440.

A Message for **Spouses**

Gen. Michael W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, sends this message for military spouses in MARAD-MIN 206/04:

There are over 78,000 spouses in the Marine Corps family, and every one of them is vital to mission accom-

Iplishment.

Marines have a tough duty, however, our spouses' duty is equally tough.

Marine spouses endure long separations often fraught with anxiety and worry, while continuing to parent children, pay bills, and support their Marine.

The Corps has long known that family readiness leads to mission readiness and retention.

Since Sept. 11, 2001 the demands on our Marines and their loving spouses have only increased. This pace will continue in the near term, thus all the more important to reflect on military spouses -- they truly deserve a special day of recognition.

Simply put, we could not do it without them.

RotoVue Comments

Help us make *The RotoVue* a better newspaper. Let us know how we are doing through the Station's Interactive Customer Evaluation system at http://ice.disa.mil/.

For more information about the ICE site, contact the Management Analysis team at 449-5451/5452.

On the cover

Maj. Gen. John G.
Castellaw, of Alamo, Tenn.,
and commanding general of
2d Marine Aircraft Wing, and
Col. Mark D. Mahaffey, a
native of Columbus, Ohio,
and commanding officer of
Marine Aircraft Group-29
here, pins a Presidential Unit
Citation on MAG-29's colors
during a formal ceremony
held on the flightline outside
of the Marine Aviation
Logistics Squadron-29 hangar
May 12.



Commanding Officer Col. Stephen L. Forand

Executive Officer
Lt. Col. Karl S. Elebash

<u>Sergeant Major</u> Sgt. Maj. Lewis Summerville

> Public Affairs Officer Capt. Rob James

Deputy Public Affairs Officer 1st Lt. Katherine L. O'Neill

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If you have any comments or suggestions you may also contact the public affairs office at (910) 449-6196 or fax (910) 449-6478.

Touching goodbyes for 'Untouchables' commander

Lance Cpl. Steven R. Sawyer correspondent

Lt. Col. Joseph K. Haviland relinquished command of Marine Wing Support Squadron-272 to Lt. Col. Paul C. Merritt during a change of command ceremony held outside the squadron's headquarters May 4.

"It has been a tremendous privilege to serve as the commanding officer and to have deployed the entire squadron through surge and combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. However, all good things come to an end and it's my turn to move on," said Haviland, a native of Havertown, Pa., who has spent the last 18 months as the commanding officer of MWSS-272.

The "Untouchables" new commander, Merritt, was previously an information operations instructor at the Joint Forces Staff College at Naval Air Station Norfolk, Va., before coming to New River.

"I'm honored for the opportunity

to command this squadron. [Marine Wing Support Squadron-] 272 has a great reputation for their actions during Operation Iraqi Freedom," said the Rocky Mount, N.C., native.

Merritt said he intends to build on the successes of the squadron, continuing to uphold an aggressive training regimen.

"My first goal is to do a unit assessment. I want to understand the character of the squadron, find if there are any weaknesses to be discussed and continue to provide for unit readiness for the next engagement," he said.

"I believe Lieutenant Colonel Merritt is well qualified and experienced, and I think he has a vision for guiding the squadron to succeed at whatever task they are faced with," added Haviland.

During Merritt's career, he served as platoon commander in the 9th Engineer Support Battalion in Okinawa, Japan, and as series commander at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. His first visit to the Jacksonville area was during an assignment to the 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Force Service Support Group, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, where he served as the assistant operations officer and commanded Alpha Company and Engineer Support Company.

After this tour, he returned to Okinawa as the operations officer, Facilities Engineer Division, MCB Okinawa.

While there, he supported implementation of the Special Action Committee agreement between Japan and the United States.

This background could give Merritt an edge as commanding officer, said Haviland, who is ready for the next step himself, which is to attend the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C.

"You don't put your heart and soul into something and simply walk away," said Haviland. "You hope to always leave a little of yourself behind."



Lance Cpl. Steven R. Sawyer

The new commanding officer of Marine Wing Support Squadron-272, Lt. Col. Paul C. Merritt, of Rocky Mount, N.C., passes the squadron colors to the squadron sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Clarence W. Richardson, after receiving command of MWSS-272 during a ceremony May 4.

Bishop graces Memorial Chapel

Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo correspondent

A Catholic bishop visiting the Station Memorial Chapel confirmed 12 local teens during a ceremony May 9.

Bishop Francis X. Roque was ordained a Catholic priest in 1953 and became an Army commissioned chaplain in 1961, where he served tours in Korea, Vietnam, Germany and Fort Hood, Texas, before retiring in 1983. Now, he is an auxiliary bishop who assists military religious needs while remaining retired from the service.

"I've been all over the world. I've traveled all around the United States, in all sorts of cities up and down the eastern region," said Roque, who is originally from Warwick, R.I. "But, all I can say is, what a wonderful little community you have right here."

The service consisted of a confirmation ceremony and a Mother's Day message.

He performed the rite of confirmation ceremony for Philip Cole, Christopher Fitzgerald, Brandon Griffith, Claire Guillote, Michael Gulyas, Emily Iwanski, Daniel Kane, Joseph Miccolis, Andrew and Anthony Mocarski, Jennifer Wike and Megan Edwards.

Navy Lt. Joseph Koch, the Station chap-

lain, assisted Bishop Roque with serving communion.

"It was a wonderful spiritual experience. It was well organized and because of that, we had a very good turnout," said Koch, who is a native of India.

Col. Stephen L. Forand, the Station commanding officer, was the lector of the service.

"Confirmation is a holy sacrament in the Catholic Church. It is performed by a bishop, and we were fortunate to have Bishop Roque come for ours," said Forand, a Fall River, Mass., native.

In addition to reading from the Bible, he also joined Bishop Roque and his sword-bearing Knights of Columbus guides up the aisle to commence the service.

According to the Knights of Columbus Web site, they are a Catholic men's fraternal benefit society, which works hand-in-hand with the Catholic Church.

Following the service, Forand presented Bishop Roque with a plaque to express the Station's gratitude.

"Everyone here has been wonderful. New River is full of beautiful people who are very grateful and very special to me. This has been one of my greatest visits," said Roque. "Remember, faith fills leaders."

Environmental director wins award



Sgt. Wayne Campbell

Mary Wheat, Station safety and environmental director, accompanied by Maj. Gen. Robert M. Flanagan, MCAS Cherry Point commanding general, and Col. Stephen L. Forand, Station commanding officer, receives the Department of the Navy Individual Environmental Quality Award from the Honorable Hansford T. Johnson, assistant secretary of the Navy, at a ceremony held at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., on May 4.

... and the PUC goes to MAG-29, squadrons

Lance Cpl. Jeffrey A. Everitt correspondent

Marine Aircraft Group-29 and its squadrons received a Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance in action against enemy forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in a ceremony held outside the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron-29 hangar May 12.

MAG-29 and its operational units departed New River Jan. 15 and arrived off the coast of Kuwait Feb. 15 to provide close and continuous support of I Marine Expeditionary Force, according to Lt. Col. Dennis J. Barham, MAG-29 executive officer.

Col. Mark D. Mahaffey, commanding officer of the "War Eagles," said the squadron flew more than 5,800 flight hours and delivered several thousand tons of equipment and several hundred artillery pieces.

They took approximately 2,200 Marines and more

than 90 aircraft of all types and models, added the native of Columbus, Ohio.

The aircraft the MAG supplied were the AH-1W Super Cobra, UH-1N Huey, CH-46E Sea Knight and CH-53E Super Stallion.

The MAG was involved in the war's opening night of hostility and endured continuous combat throughout their entire stay from March 21 to April 24, 2003 while attached to I MEF, said Barham, a native of Knightdale, N.C.

"The most positive take-away from this is, we safely brought back everyone and everything that we took with us," finished Barham. "That is the ultimate success."



Lance Cpl. Jeffrey A. Everitt

The commanding officers of Marine Aircraft Group-29 squadrons pin Presidential Unit Ciations on the MAG-29 squadrons' colors.

Day of Remembrance: A look back on Nazi Germany

Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb correspondent

A program called Day of Remembrance was held here May 7 to commemorate the suffering of European Jews at the hands of the Nazis during World War II.

The two-hour program consisted of a Holocaust poetry reading by Staff Sgt. Nichole K. Jacobs, equal opportunity representative for Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, lunch and a personal account by guest speaker Gizella Abramson, a Holocaust survivor.

According to Staff Sgt. Mario R. Morales, Station EO advisor, more than 100 guests showed their support at the luncheon.

"Next year we may need a bigger dining hall," added Jacobs.

She went on to say, "The speaker was very thorough. She explained things so you could actually feel her pain."

Morales, from Englewood, N.J., was one of many whose eyes were opened by the story of her personal struggles during a dark time in the world's history

"She sure gave us a better understanding of how precious the word freedom really is," he added about the freedoms that many take for granted.

"I remember watching a young boy pointing out all of our houses to the German soldiers and being so scared that they were going to take us away from our homes," Abramson recalled.

During this time, Jews were forced to live in sub-standard housing complexes called ghettos. Abramson spent most of her childhood in the Luck Ghetto in Poland.

She recollected another incident that occurred. "I remember when a young woman came to our

home carrying the ashes of her dead children. The Nazi soldiers, enraged by her refusal to drop the ashes, whipped her and sent all the residents of our home to death camps."

She also explained how important good morals and ethics are and how fighting indifference is the key to our future, said Jacobs, a Cape Charles, Va., native.

"The program went very well. I think we can expect Mrs. Abramson back next year," she added.

Abramson survived the Majdanek Death Camp and later earned a Bachelor of Arts in education in 1951.

"I had a lot of junior Marines come to me afterward and thank me for the event. Most of them were given a refresher course regarding our jobs as U.S. Marines," said Morales. "As Marines, it's our job to protect the freedom and the human rights of individuals regardless of their skin color, personal religious beliefs or ethnic background."



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Gizella Abramson, a native of Poland and guest speaker during the Day of Remembrance on May 7, recalls spending most of her childhood in Jewish ghettos and the events that led to her placement in a Nazi concentration camp.

Not just reporting news, becoming it

Sgt. Christine C. Odom correspondent

The Jacksonville/Onslow Chamber of Commerce and Military Affairs Committee selected Sgt. Andrew W. Miller, a combat correspondent at the Joint Public Affairs Office here, as the servicemember of the month for May.

"It was an overwhelming feeling to be selected," said Miller, from Beechgrove, Tenn. "I've never received an award like this."

According to his nomination letter, Miller has performed his duties in a superb manner and demonstrates his character by supporting both the Air Station and the local community. He has organized numerous visits or tours of New River for neighboring schools and civic groups.

In addition to organizing visits, Miller performs his journalistic duties exceptionally. He contributes news and feature material for publication in the command newspaper, and provides photographic support for events and training evolutions involving Station Marines, Sailors, civilians and tenant commands.

"With numerous medals and ribbons, it surprised me to see how humble he is," said Jeff Clark, vice chairman of MAC and a local resident of Richlands, N.C. "He acted as if getting those awards was part of a Marine's job."

Aside from his military commitments, Miller also volunteers for Special Olympics and has made a commitment to tutoring a child enrolled at Parkwood Elementary School in Jacksonville.

"I felt pretty good about myself after I found out I was being nominated for the servicemember of the month," he added. "I appreciate the fact my seniors have confidence in me as a leader."

Miller went on to say his wife was very proud of his achievement; however, she didn't expect so much attention to come from it.

He admirably expressed, "I owe this honor to her; she deserves all the credit. Whenever I come home, she's there to listen to all my complaints about work and without her, I would have never been able to receive this award."

He maintains that having worked for some of the most professional Marines in his field has had a strong impact on the leadership he exemplifies, and they have contributed to the type of Marine he has become.

Miller is what the Corps considers a "first termer," but he mentioned with the way things are going and the recognition he has earned, the Corps may have a careerist on their hands.

"When I first joined, I didn't think any of this would be in my future, but now, I have a big motivational reason for re-enlistment," added Miller. "I can only hope my experiences influence my junior Marines to improve."

Known as an asset to his seniors, an initiative-bearing noncommissioned officer to his peers, a devoted husband, and a good citizen to the community, this Tennessean has expressed the true meaning of "espirit de corps" and

demonstrated model citizenship.

"You can't be content with yourself - keep striving to be better," concluded Miller.



Sgt. Christine C. Odom

Sgt. Andrew W. Miller and wife, Brandy, both from Beechgrove, Tenn., attend the servicemember of the month ceremony where Miller received honors Monday.

Deployed squadrons change commands

Staff Sgt. A.C. Mink 3d Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq -- In an unprecedented occurrence here, two East Coast squadrons, attached to a West Coast aircraft group, carried out a dual change of command ceremony April 30.

Lt. Col. James D. "Stripper" Grace, Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-167, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, relinquished command to Lt. Col. Christopher M. "Tone" Clayton as simultaneously Lt. Col. Michael H. "Shepard" Belding passed the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-261 colors to Lt. Col. John R. "Bones" Parker.

Though both are 2d MAW units, they are currently attached to Marine Aircraft Group-16, 3d MAW, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"One of the unique things about this deployment is that there are aviation and support units from every Marine Aircraft Wing in the Marine Corps brought together to perform a mission in support of First Marine Expeditionary Force," said Belding, a Waynesboro, Pa., native.

Clayton, who was the executive officer for HML/A-167 since November 2003, credited his

deployment for benefiting him in the job ahead.

"This opportunity I have been afforded has been absolutely invaluable," said Clayton. "The transition will be smooth, because I have been intimately involved in the plans and execution of the current deployment."

A self-proclaimed military brat, Clayton is originally from Kentucky, but now claims Jacksonville, N.C., "home" for his family.

Speaking of Grace, a Portland, Ore., native, and about taking command of the "Warriors," Clayton remarked, "It's an honor and privilege to take command and accept this squadron - it's like a finely tuned race car, already running in great shape ... now it's my turn to drive.

"Stripper and I were friends before, but as I worked for him as his [executive officer], I have only grown to admire him more for his leadership and genuine concern for his Marines and Sailors," Clayton added. "We are closer friends now for that."

The "Raging Bulls" of HMM-261 and the HML/A-167 "Warriors" have flown dozens of missions together, with AH-1W Super Cobras and UH-1N Hueys flying alongside CH-46E Sea Knights or "Phrogs," so the opportunity to change command together just seemed to fit, according to Belding.



Sgt. Justin Kaleta

Lt. Col. John R. Parker takes the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-261 colors from Lt. Col. Michael H. Belding as Lt. Col. Christopher M. Clayton takes the Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-167 colors from Lt. Col. James D. Grace during the first dual change of command ceremony in Al Asad, Iraq, on April 30.

'Gunrunners' come back to home cookin'



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Sgt. Bradley J. Ross, aircrew training coordinator with Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-269 and Waldorf, Md., native, along with Staff Sgt. Bryant T. Franklin, a "Gunrunners" maintenance controller from Duluth, Minn., prepares lunch for their warriors after returning from Haiti on May 11.

ACE maintainers withstand Afghan climate

Sgt. Matt C. Preston 22d MEU public affairs

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan --

Though most enemy anti-aircraft guns were destroyed when U.S. forces entered Afghanistan in 2001, the climate remains hostile to the aircraft of the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).

With high temperatures reaching well past the 100 degree mark and peak wind speeds of 60 knots blowing dust and other debris into engines, the maintainers of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-266 (Reinforced), the 22d MEU (SOC)'s aviation combat element have been careful to ensure their aircraft are able to fly.

Despite being in a dangerous environment, taking shortcuts is not an option for the "Fighting Griffins" of HMM-266.

"Some people think, 'this is combat, I can cut corners," said Cpl. Ryan Armes of Chandler, Ind., and CH-46E crew chief. "That's not how we do business. We train as we fight."

Now, the squadron is fighting as they trained. Instead of cutting down on procedures, they're adding them.

"We've added a couple more inspections because of the sand and the dust," said Armes. "We've washed the planes twice as much."

Keeping the planes clean isn't to look pretty. Dirt in the wrong places can become hazardous.

"The dust is a big factor," said Cpl. Matt Toscano, a Boulder, Mont., native and AV-8B Harrier airframe mechanic. "We have to compensate by taping everything up."

Tape prevents dust from entering the hydraulic systems of the aircraft during maintenance. Dirt and grit in the systems could cause the pilot to lose control of the aircraft.

Though changing defective hydraulic system components is part of the maintainer's job, one part of the aircraft that can't be replaced is the Marine himself. Afghanistan's weather causes less obvious problems that maintainers must look out for when working on aircraft.

Heat also affects the Marines' bodies. They are constantly drinking water to avoid heat injuries, which could range from heat cramps to heat strokes. The Marines must also be careful of the rocky terrain. Minor ankle sprains have been commonplace amongst Marines of the 22d MEU, because of rocks laid down to prevent dust. The dust has caused some upper respiratory infections as well as eye irritations.

The terrain doesn't just put the Marines at risk. The aircraft are also vulnerable to the terrain, as one crew of a CH-53E found out. Heat and terrain combined to cause a blowout of its bird's tires. Though it's one more thing the maintainers have to worry about, they have all the tools they need to accomplish the repairs and keep the birds flying.

Legal The RotoVue

Courts-martial

A Marine from Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron-26 was found guilty at a special courtmartial May 11 for one specification of Article 112a, wrongful use of marijuana.

Punishment: Bad conduct discharge and 40 days confinement.

A Marine from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-464 was found guilty at a special court-martial May 11 for one specification of Article 112a, wrongful use of cocaine.

Punishment: Reduction to E-1 and 60 days confinement.

MCCS can help protect against identity theft

There are steps you can take to reduce your risk of identity theft and protect your personal information.

One of the best ways to guard against identity theft is to review your credit report every year

There are three main credit bureaus that provide personal credit reports: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.

For a small fee, you can order a copy of your credit report. Residents of some states are entitled to one free credit report each year.

Other ways to protect yourself against identity theft are to never leave a purse or wallet in the car, don't carry more credit cards than you need, and keep a list of account information in a secure place.

Also, it's not a good idea to carry your Social Security number or birth certificate in your wallet or purse.

Don't have your Social Security number or driver's license number printed on checks and take your Social Security number off your drivers license.

Be careful about giving personal information over the phone.

Other hints include protecting your personal information on

the Internet; make sure that your credit card; bank and phone accounts are protected by passwords that cannot be easily guessed; reduce the amount of personal data available; and be cautious when using automated teller machines and phone cards.

Properly store or dispose of any documents with your personal information you don't need and keep track of all ATM and credit card receipts.

Pay attention to your billing cycles for credit cards and other accounts.

For more information, call the Marine Family Service Center at 449-5259.

Feature The RotoVue

'Wild Man' loose on New River



Sgt. Andrew W. Miller

John C. Griffith, wildlife biologist and native of Chattanooga, Tenn., loads a "screamer and banger" May 11. These devices are used to help keep the animal population out of the way of aircraft. Sgt. Andrew W. Miller correspondent

Aircraft safety hazards are dealt with daily by air personnel, but another somewhat unusual hazard is now being studied - wildlife.

Since March 8, John C. Griffith, wildlife biologist and native of Chattanooga, Tenn., has been conducting a Wildlife Hazard Assessment. This bird and mammal survey is helping identify migration patterns of certain animal species and reduce strike hazards to aircraft. Some of the animals he will encounter include deer, alligators, snakes, turkey vultures, geese and pigeons.

"Griffith, who is with the Natural Resources staff at MCAS Cherry Point, will be determining where and when aircraft and wildlife might conflict, otherwise known as Bird/Animal Strike Hazard or BASH," said Kirk R. Kropinack, safety and environmental affairs assessment specialist and native of Swansboro, N.C. "A large part of

what he has been doing is coordinating with squadron and group safety offices in an effort to set up a New River BASH working group."

Aircraft are not the only things affected by the animals. Griffith hopes to keep them from being a nuisance to humans as well.

"I am here to find out what kinds of animals are on this Station and what kind of habitats they like," said Griffith. "Once I figure out that much, I can work to keep them where they should be and away from people and aircraft."

He is able to achieve this through graphic maps of the Station where he plots animal movement and migration.

Several methods can be used to remove animals. Live trapping can be used to remove animals and place them in another environment. Sometimes killing the animals is required in hostile situations, but Griffith's primary tool to help the animals with their migration is a pistol that fires "screamers and bangers." As the name might suggest,

these devices are loud and produce some smoke when fired, startling the animals so they leave the area.

Griffith also fills out the work orders to control those habitats and keep the unwanted animals from returning. This ranges from draining ditches to bush hogging, and cutting trees from around helicopter landing zones in the Camp Lejeune area.

"At the end of his 14-month study, Griffith will produce a 100 page document for the safety office that will assist with future issues of wildlife hazards," said Kropinack.

In order to help Griffith and the rest of the Station, he asks that personnel and residents report any unusual animal behaviors they observe.

"Communication is the key to success, and I need for everyone to know who I am so that we can make the Station a safer and more enjoyable place for both us and the animals," said Griffith.

He can be reached by phone at 449-0630 or (919) 594-3429.

Don't hesitate, find out if you rate

Lance Cpl. Steven R. Sawyer correspondent

If you're tired of living in the barracks, and you need a place of your own, maybe because you have a family, there might be some options available to you.

According to the Pay and Allowance Advisory Notice 58 - 97, as of Jan. 1, 1998, all servicemembers are provided additional funds under a system known as basic allowance for housing, which is a monthly pay benefit meant to suppliment basic allowance for quarters as well as variable housing allowance.

Determined by pay grade and location, BAH provides servicemembers with housing compensation comparable to civilian costs.

So how do you know if you rate BAH?

There are a number of factors governing BAH, said Lance Cpl. Manuel Bonel, service record book maintenance section head at the Installation Personnel Administration Center here.

"It's all about the 'what ifs," said the Tuscon, Ariz., native.

"What ifs" like whether or not the Marine is married. If so, the process can be fairly simple.

Marines with civilian spouses must simply bring their marriage certificate to IPAC, so they can apply for basic allowance for subsistence, also known

as commuted rations. After their application is approved, they are then authorized to receive full BAH.

If they are dual active duty without children, then both receive BAH without family members, which is a modified BAH subtracting the estimated cost of supporting a family member, explained Bonel.

"As long as they establish a household together, they're okay," said Bonel. However, proof must be provided.

Family members are another "what if." A Marine with a family member, who still lives on base, rates what is known as BAH-differential or the monetary difference between full BAH and BAH without dependents. This pro-

vides the Marine with enough money to support his family members, but does not cover the necessary expenses required to live on their own.

BAH-DIFF is authorized for Marines paying child support or who are unable to live with their families.

What if two Marines are married with children? The higher ranking of the two receives full BAH, while the other receives

BAH without family members.

Something to take into consideration, however,

is when
Marines pay
child support
for a previous
family member
after begining another

relationship with new family members. In such cases, the Marine receives full BAH, covering the current family member, but not the child

receiving child support because the Corps allots enough funds for only one family member.

This doesn't exempt the Marine

from paying child support, added Bonel. They must take care of it themselves.

Single Marines have a longer, and somewhat difficult, process ahead of them.

To apply for BAH, Marines must submit an application, which can be picked up at the squadron or unit S-1 administration section.

The Marine then submits it to IPAC with a monthly financial management record, a barracks status report and a recommendation by the Marine's commanding officer.

Once everything is submitted, it is then verified by IPAC. If it's approved, it is then forwarded to the Marine's unit embark and logistics section, who verifies with the command's barrack whether or not the they have the ability to support the request. If so, the process is complete.

Some grounds for dismissal of the BAH request include financial irresponsibility, lack of an official recommendation or simply surplus room in the barrack.

In the end, the Marine's command has the final say-so.

Opinion The RotoVue

Mishap ... a minor misfortune?

Sgt. Juan Vara correspondent

The morning of April 20, 2003, I received a very unique phone call. I was covering an Easter Softball Tournament while deployed to MCAS Yuma, Ariz., with Marine Aircraft Group-26, and my cell phone went off. A buddy of mine called to let me know a Marine from our squadron died in a car wreck during Easter break.

It shocked me. I knew this Marine. He wanted to learn how to play the guitar, and sometimes he'd stop by my barrack room to "jam out" for a little while. He had gotten in trouble for providing alcohol to a minor, and after losing rank and doing restriction and extra duties, he was working on cleaning up his act. I can say he was making a great deal of progress.

A few weeks after this incident, I learned that my buddy was allegedly drunk behind the wheel. He made a mistake in our homeland that unfortunately cost him his life.

Every now and then I read safety messages that list the number of Marines dying in operational, aviation and non-operational "mishaps." Sometimes the number of Marines and Sailors dying on leave or liberty is higher than that of those who die under fire while in Fallujah, Afghanistan or Haiti.

I put special emphasis on the word mishap because The Associated Press Stylebook defines it as "a minor misfortune." There is nothing minor about unnecessarily losing Marines and Sailors.

Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Michael W. Hagee believes that safety is fundamental to force protection and the operational readiness of the Marine Corps. The Commandant, along with the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. William L. Nyland, is committed to preventing deaths, injuries and operational illnesses throughout See SAFETY, page 12



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Safety is paramount. Use operational risk management to avoid this from happening.

Opinion The RotoVue

SAFETY

from page 11

the Corps.

Through May 12, 36 Marines have died in off-duty accidents. Twenty-seven of these deaths occurred in privately owned motor vehicles and excessive speed was a factor in four of them

According to the Commandant, if this trend continues there will be more recreation related fatalities this fiscal year than in the previous seven

Now I'm not a safety guru, but if I can get you to read the following driving tips and use operational risk management every holiday weekend, we can avoid phone calls like the one I got last year, and we'll help all units aboard MCAS New River stay ready to deploy at a moment's notice.

Driving Safety Tips

- Don't drink and drive. Half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related.
- Buckle up. Most accidents occur within 25 miles of home at speeds of 40 mph or less. Never drive with children or pets on your lap.
- Be in the right frame of mind. If you are fatigued or emotionally upset, don't get behind the wheel.
- **Drive defensively**. Always try to foresee trouble, and never expect the other driver to do the right thing.
 - Think ahead and expect

the unexpected. Be on the lookout for developing situations in traffic at least 12 - 15 seconds ahead. Always give yourself room to brake for or maneuver around an emergency.

- Be smooth and be patient. Smoothness and finesse win every time over sudden, jerky motions that increase the chances of skids and loss of con-
- Slow down at night. Reduce your speeds at night to compensate for lost visibility and never over-drive your headlights.
 - Dim your high beams. Be

considerate; dim high beams to oncoming traffic, as well as vehicles you approach from the rear.

- **Divert your eyes**. When you meet high beams head on, don't stare into them. Look to the right edge of the road.
- Focus driving lights. Many vehicles have an extra set of driving or fog lights that should be used sparingly in well-lighted urban areas, and should be focused on the road.

Information extracted from http://www.nada.org/NADAGuid es/Safe_Driving_Tips.htm.

Opinion The RotoVue

Book review: 'Ender's Game'

Lance Cpl. Steven R. Sawyer correspondent

Earth is recovering from its near destruction at the hands of an alien force, a war that cost millions of lives, but eventually forced the aliens to retreat. The first attacks were a surprise, but now humanity is on the offensive.

The stage is set for Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, a small child destined to do the impossible: destroy the invaders.

This is the background behind Orson Scott Card's "Ender's Game," a short story which grew to span seven novels in all. Though reading the whole series isn't necessary, some may find it hard not to. Card draws the readers so deep into his characters that you may keep asking, "what's next?"

"Ender's Game," is an amazing story in itself. In the book, the world is united under a few government factions after the war with the aliens -- a war that was so devastating, it made mankind unite against a common enemy.

With the goal of survival in mind, resources from across the globe are pooled while massive star fleets are built; powerful weapons are created; and the smartest and brightest young minds are sent to Battle School.

The school is an academy designed to teach children the ways of war through regimented lifestyles and a game known as the "battle room." Through it, the International Fleet builds leaders and fighters needed from the earliest ages of development.

One of the main advantages of the battle room, I feel, is it supposedly teaches us, an earth-bound race, to live, work and more importantly, fight in space where the concepts of up, down and direction have little importance.

The training and conditioning of the Battle School is also interesting. Young children are put through as much routine, training and testing as some of the best in military history.

Our unfortunate hero, Wiggin, is the third child in a society where having

more than two children is illegal. His older brother, Peter, is smart but cruel, and Valentine, his older sister, is too nice. In an effort too reach a perfect balance, the International Fleet sanctioned the birth of Andrew.

Known as "Ender" by those who love him, a nickname given to him for being the last child possible to be born; Andrew is a very small child with a unique view on life. Often separated from peers and friends, he learns to handle his own problems with more decisiveness than many adults have.

This book takes a look into the heart of a leader more than many others I've read. "Ender" is faced with the challenges of gaining respect, maintaining unit morale and cohesion and dealing with the stress and anguish of losing those under his command.

Read the book for what it is, and you might see a young child who's really smart, doing impossible things, or you may find a window into the human soul.



Ender's Game, a 324-page book about a boy genius who trains to destroy invaders.

Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Akil J. Barlow, a student from Baton Rouge, La., spends his afternoon bowling at the Station's bowling alley.

MCCS: It all comes back to you

Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo correspondent

"We've got our noses in a lot of stuff," said Paul F. Quinn, the director of Station Marine Corps Community Services, about services they provide.

With their seemingly endless list of recreational activities, eateries and services, MCCS does a great deal for Marines aboard New River. This includes dining at fast-food restaurants and recreational activities at the Station Marina, added Quinn, a Scranton, Pa., native.

Recreation is not limited to just the Marina. The recreation department at MCCS is busy expanding existing facilities and urging for more, said Richard Cole, MCCS recreation director.

"Facilities for recreation are numerous, including the gyms, auto and wood hobby shops, gear issue and Station theater, to name just a few," explained Cole, a Havelock, N.C., resident.

The recreation department caters to what New River Marines want, not what MCCS thinks they want. For example, the theater schedule is comprised of movies submitted by Marines, he added.

Marines can also get involved with the Single

Marine Program and Semper Fit, which are both offered through the recreation department.

"I truly believe that the Single Marine Program on New River has saved lives, and our Semper Fit program is one of the most successful and best in the entire Corps," said Cole, who during his career has worked with MCCS on five Marine bases.

Recreational services, however, are not just what MCCS offers. They are allotted a designated amount of money for the year, which is divvied between various buildings and services throughout the Marine Corps. To supplement the funds MCCS requires for their activities, they have food and hospitality establishments, which earn money.

"Subway, Wendy's and Noble Roman's all operate freely on New River, and in turn, they assist the Station with the funds to hold a birthday ball or a picnic. The Marines benefit from those businesses, and MCCS is able to purchase equipment, provide services or expand because of the funds they bring in," said Quinn. "In the end, it's you, the Marines, who benefit from this; it all comes back to you."

In addition to eateries, the Station bowling alley provides Marines with discounted rates, which also assist with funding. The Enlisted and Officers

Clubs do the same.

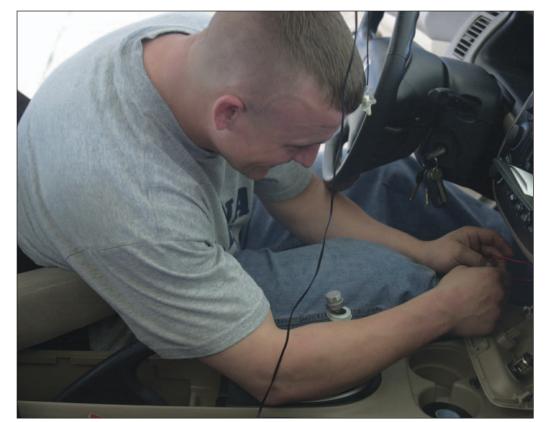
Even the Marine Corps Exchange helps MCCS in funding everything they do, said Quinn.

Beyond recreation and food, MCCS is dedicated to providing Marines with services needed for life as a Marine. MCCS is responsible for the Station's dry cleaner, Movie Mart, car wash and barbershops, all of which give money back to MCCS as well.

On top of everything else, MCCS offers family services to Marines, Sailors and their families. Servicemembers can bring their children to the Youth Activities Center or the Child Development Center to benefit the families' well being.

Servicemembers can also go to the Marine and Family Services Center for assistance. For Marines without families, MCCS has an "Adopt-a-Marine" program that helps single Marines feel like they are part of the family.

In short, MCCS is a vital part of the Marine Corps, especially at New River. It was created to better Marines' lives while on active duty, and since it's inception, MCCS has grown to help retirees, Department of Defense employees and servicemember's families.



Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo

Lance Cpl. Russell L. Davis, an Eastville, N.C., native and avionics mechanic with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-263, uses tools to install fog lights on his car at the Auto Hobby Shop.



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tal

Shawn A. Boggs, financial planner and former Marine, spends the day on the water at the Station Marina. The marina has a variety of boats and equipment available for rent.



Lance Cpl. Daniel W. Perkins, a Greenfield, N.Y., native and CH-46E airframer, and Pfc. Ryan W. Steenberg, a Rochester, N.Y., native and CH-46E crew chief, both with Naval Air Maintenance Training Marine Unit, utilize the Wood Hobby Shop by sanding a piece of wood to be used in a chain of command board.

MCAS Family Pool Open to all ranks and their quests.

12 p.m. May 28

Officers' Club

Tuesday - Sunday 12 - 6 p.m.

(Closed on Monday for maintenance and cleaning.)



Children under 10 must be accompanied by a patron 16 years or older. Patron must stay at the facility with the child!

Swim Lesson Registration May 17 - 27

for more info. 449-6436

The Station Pool is closed for renovations, sorry for the inconvenience!





Kickin' Osprey

SUMMER

July 12 - 16

Registration: May 17 - June 28





MCAS New River Station Soccer Field

1st Session

8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

5 - 10 years old

Ages: 5 - 15

2nd Session

12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

11 - 15 years old

Teaches basic and advance soccer skills. All campers should bring water bottle, towel and cleats (rubber only).

For more details call 449-6714 Sports The RotoVue

John Gunn's sports highlights

Pat Tillman not the only NFL player killed in action

Leaving a Marine escort behind him, commissioner Paul Tagliabue walked solemnly to the podium for the Saturday National Football League draft and asked a for few moments to remember one of his own.

Pat Tillman's combat death in Afghanistan shocked us. His story of sacrifice and honor is one the commissioner knows well and will not let anyone forget, as if we could.

"We will make certain," Tagliabue pledged, " that Pat's values and what he represents continues to have a permanent place in the league."

An annual award bearing Tillman's

name might ensure that immortality, the commissioner suggested.

Everyone knows Tillman's story, how he gave up millions after 9/11 to serve and die for his country.

Maybe you don't know about Marine veteran Jack Lummus, a Texan who died nearly 60 years ago on Iwo Jima, wrote Dallas Morning News columnist Kevin Sherrington.

An Ennis, Texas, product who was tall and handsome, Lummus lettered in football and baseball at Baylor, then played for the New York Giants in '41.

Enlisting in the Marines, he became a second lieutenant. In the spring of '45, he commanded a rifle platoon on the island of Iwo Jima, where more than 7,000 American and 20,000 Japanese

soldiers would die in a hellacious month of what was often hand-to-hand battle.

He spent thirty-six hours stuck in a hole. Finally, stuffing grenades into his pockets, Lummus bolted from cover and ran to a Japanese pillbox, and another, and still another, knocking out all three despite the concussion of grenades that flattened him twice, wrote Sherrington.

When his mission was complete and he had single-handedly removed the immediate threat, Lummus fell for the last time. A land mine blew away both legs just above the boot line.

"Over the years, a lot of legends grew up around Lummus' story, " Sherrington wrote.

The first man to Lummus' side, Neilson can't forget the words of a hero. "Did we take the ridge?" Lummus asked as Neilson comforted him.

"Yes, we did, lieutenant."

"Well, I guess I won't play any more football, will I?"

Lummus died a few hours later. He was 29. In a ceremony at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Ennis a year later, a rear admiral hung a Medal of Honor around the neck of Lummus' mother.

Gunn is a member of the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Assn., 2nd Marine Division Assn., Marine Corps Intelligence Assn., Marine Corps Aviation Assn., Marine Corps Heritage Foundation and Naval Aviation Museum Foundation.

New River softball standings

Division A	<u>w</u>	L
MALS-29 #1	7	1
H&HS	6	1
HMH-464	5	3
VMX-22	5	3
SOI	2	6
MAG-29 HQ	1	5

Division B

DIVISION D		
MALS-26	8	1
MWSS-272	7	1
MALS- 29 #2	4	4
PMO	3	4
NAMTRA	3	7
HMM-365	2	6
MAG-26 HQ	2	8

^{*}These were the standings May 14.



Roto View

What do you think of the servicemembers' actions towards prisoners in Iraq?



"That incident has set us back 100 years in that part of the world. Marines would not let that fly. Marines would have raised a flag."

Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Washington, D.C.

"It's deplorable, yes, but I don't think it should be front page news. Our justice system is handling things, and the media needs to find something else to report on."







"I think it's a bunch of bull. They shouldn't have taken pictures, and now they're in a mess."

Pfc. Sapphire P. Bohon, aviation operations specialist, Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-269 Williams, Ind.

"We should follow the golden rule, meaning we should take care of the enemy as we would expect them to take care of us. The exposure is hurting us a lot."

Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Lira, sanitation inspector, Marine Wing Support Squadron-272 Loredo, Texas

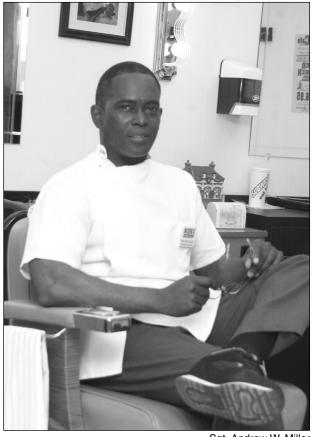




"It's awful, but I don't think their treatment towards the prisoners should represent the military as a whole. It's always a couple people who make the rest of the organization look bad."

Lance Cpl. Justin F. Lawson, maintenance administrator, Marine Aircraft Group-26 Kinston, N.C. Services The RotoVue

Love in action helps in tough times



Sgt. Andrew W. Miller

Heuston L. Hall, Marine Aircraft Group-29 barber and native of Beulaville, N.C., celebrates more than 30 years of service here at New River.

Lt. j.g. David E. Rozanek Marine Aircraft Group-29 chaplain

If you work on New River and you have hair, then you probably know the name Heuston Hall. He is a well-known figure around here because he has been our barber since Feb. 14, 1972.

Hall is a favorite of many people not only because of his skill with the shears, but because of his upbeat personality and his genuine respect for all people.

On Jan. 14, Hall was working at his barbershop across from Marine Aircraft Group-29 and at approximately 2 p.m., he received a distressing phone call from his family informing him that he needed to come home at once, his house was on fire.

While driving home, his family and friends quickly formed a volunteer firefighting party in an attempt to save the house.

Before Chinquapin and Beulaville firefighters arrived, volunteers, armed with buckets and garden hoses, managed to extinguish the fire coming from the kitchen stove while risking their own safety. It would be up to the Chinquapin and Beulaville firefighters to extinguish the blaze in the kitchen and first floor.

Later, the firefighters expressed the efforts of the volunteers most likely saved the structure of the house.

The Hall home suffered serious fire damage to the first floor and smoke damage to the second, but the Hall family was not homeless or helpless. Family members in the community opened their doors and gave shelter to Hall, his wife and their children while neighbors and members of the Church of God and True Holiness opened their wallets and purses.

News of the tragedy quickly spread throughout New River, Camp Lejeune and beyond. The reaction of the Marine Corps was swift.

"I've never seen anything like it. The help is more than I ever expected. From corporals to colonels, and from New River to Cherry Point; everyone has given so much," said Hall. "This is indeed love in action!"

The Beulaville, N.C., native conveyed an emotional thank you from his heart to the Marines, Sailors and civilians who contributed so much.

This is a great example of Marines rising to the occasion and taking care of a good man in his time of need. Personnel at New River should be proud. They have proven to be "always faithful." May God bless you and reward you for your generosity, charity and love in action.

Station Chapel services

Sunday Worship

9 a.m. Mass 11 a.m. Protestant

Daily Mass

11:45 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

For more information, contact Petty Officer 1st Class Aaron D. Painter at 449-6801.

Marine Family Service Center

Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings Each Monday

11:50 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.

The Marine Family Service Center now has Alcoholics Anonymous meetings every Monday. These meetings are open to alcoholics and non-alcoholics.

Retired Affairs

Each Wednesday and Friday 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

The retired affairs representative can provide retired servicemembers and their spouses with information regarding benefits, entitlements, privileges and legal assistance.

Play Morning

Every Thursday 9:30 - 11 a.m.

Play morning is a time for mom

and dad to have fun with their children ages six and under.

For more information, please call New Parent Support Program at 451-5286.

Keystone Meetings for Teens Fach 1st and 3rd Friday

Each 1st and 3rd Friday 6 - 7 p.m.

The Keystone Meetings are a Boys and Girls Club of America Program that offers an opportunity to gain leadership skills, participate in and earn community service hours. Social activities are also available.

Everyone is invited to voice suggestions and plan events.

On the 3rd Friday of each month a prevention topic is presented for teens.

Power Hour

Every Afternoon 4 - 5 p.m.

Power Hour is an education program implemented by the Boys and Girls Club of America to help students excel in school.

Power Hour means that everyday after school, members will have a special place that is quiet and private to do their homework.

Someone will be on hand to help members who need help understanding their homework.

Tutoring can be scheduled on a weekly or daily basis.

Pre-Separation Brief

May 19

7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

This brief covers information for the servicemember and spouse separating from the military way of life.

Topics discussed include: pay entitlements, Veteran Affairs benefits, financial management, educational opportunities, transportation of household goods, job service and more.

Pre-registration is mandatory through the individual's unit transition counselor.

Stress Management, Part IV - Anger Control

May 25

1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

This is the last part in a four part series which teaches techniques to control anger.

For more information about the programs or to pre-register, call the Marine Family Service Center at 449-6110.

LCTV-10 Schedule



May 21 - 27

Show Title

Army Newswatch

Air Force News

The College of William and Mary

Jim Zumbo: Episode 1

The Battle

Navy/Marine Corps News

Recon Interview

Suicide Prevention

The Morning Report

Retreat Hell

Suicide Awareness: Making the Critical Decision

Show Times

12 a.m., 5:30 p.m.

12:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 9 p.m.

2 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 2 p.m., 7:45 p.m.

2:30 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 9:30 p.m.

3 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 10 p.m.

3:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 11 p.m.

4 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 5 p.m., 10:30 p.m.

4:15 a.m., 1:45 p.m., 5:15 p.m., 10:45 p.m.

5 a.m., 8 a.m., 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 8 p.m., 11:30 p.m.

5:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 6 p.m.

7:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m.

Bright future for Station Theater

Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo correspondent

The Station Theater, currently undergoing renovations, is scheduled to reopen July 17.

After its closure April 12, construction workers began their three-month-long project, which cost more than \$100,000, explained Richard T. Cole, the Marine Corps Community Service Semper Fit director aboard New River.

"The theater is forty years old, and it has been nickel and dimed since its inception. "Finally, we put in to have it re-done, and it went through," said Charles M. Sharpe, a Lyons, Ga., native and MCCS recreation director.

A number of items being replaced or fixed include a divider located in the lobby area, where curtains currently hang. After renovations, the curtains will be replaced by two-way doors to separate the lobby from the seating area.

The office will be re-done and both male and female restrooms will

be made handicap-accessible, added Sharpe.

Efforts are being made to expand the menu items as well, said Cole, a Havelock, N.C., resident.

Other areas of the building being addressed are the air conditioning and heating units, sound proofing the theater walls, increased lighting and new carpet in the theater seating area.

The dressing rooms will be redone, and a new floor installed on the stage.

A door will also be placed on the second floor to make changing the marquee safer, continued Cole.

"The managers and assistant managers have put in long hours. The theater is going to be nice, and we would certainly appreciate the patronage. We'll try to show you a good time," added Cole.

"Most of the work being done in the theater will be noticeable. It will be like being in a new building," finished Sharpe.

Upon the theater's re-opening, MCCS is planning something special.

For more information, contact Charles Sharpe at 449-5607.

The renovation was contracted to

Joyce and Associates.

The project is on schedule to meet the forecasted date of completion.



Lance Cpl. Zachary Frank

The Station theater will re-open its doors July 17. It closed April 12 for renovations, which include handicap-accessible restrooms and new carpet throughout the theater.

Top enlisted 'devil dog' takes first flight



Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, who hails from Washington, D.C., speaks to Marines of VMX-22 about the MV-22 Osprey on May 13.



Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo

The 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, puts on a flight helmet as he prepares for his first flight on an Osprey on May 13.

Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo correspondent

Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visited MCAS New River on Thursday.

The purpose of Estrada's visit was to give him an opportunity to fly on the MV-22 Osprey and visit with the warriors of Marine Tiltrotor Test and Evaluation Squadron-22.

The Marines gathered outside their hangar to greet their esteemed guest as he emerged from his C-130 Hercules aircraft.

Joining the squadron was their sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Roderick S. Fuller, of Charlotte, N.C.

"I believe we have a very good program here," said Fuller. "His [Estrada] visit was a great opportunity for the Marines and everyone else to see that."

After the sergeant major's 40-minute flight around the New River and Jacksonville area, he conducted an interview with local

news personnel and then spoke with squadron personnel in their ready room.

During the brief, Estrada shared his views of the aircraft with the Marines.

"This was my first experience in an Osprey. I was once very skeptical of it, but now, I'm very impressed. I felt safe the whole time," said Estrada. "I can say this aircraft has a future in combat situations," he concluded

The Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps also mentioned that he believed the Osprey to be a revolutionary aircraft for aviation and only his busy schedule keeps him from pursuing crew chief flight wings for the Osprey.

At the conclusion of the briefing, Estrada joked around with the squadron personnel and shared photographic opportunities with them.

Upon leaving the ready room, Estrada promised the Marines of VMX-22 he would return to Washington to brag about the Osprey and the Marines behind its success.



Lance Cpl. Michael Angelo

Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada exits the Osprey after his flight May 13. In addition to flying, Estrada came to visit with the Marines of Marine Tiltrotor Test and Evaluation Squadron-22.